

REMARKS**§ 103 Rejections**

Claims 9-12 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yokoyama et al. (US2002/0007000) in view of Teijin Ltd (JP 59045107) and Jeram et al. (US4340709) and evidenced by Audsley (US4929403).

The Examiner acknowledges that Yokoyama et al., does not teach that the support material has a tensile strength of at least 5 kg/mm² and contains moisture to saturation at a temperature and relative humidity at the time of use by a humidity absorption absorption treatment applied in advance.

The Examiner stated that it would have been obvious to modify Yokoyama et al.'s method of manufacturing to include a step of humidity absorption treatment based on the teachings of Teijin Ltd. (Abstracted Pub. No. JP 59045107).

The Applicant submits that Teijin Ltd. describes that, "The polyester particles comprise principle repeating units of alkylene terephthalate. As soon as the particulate polyester is formed from its polymer, its surface layer, at least is crystallized. The crystallized surface layer prevents the polyester from having an increased water content on storage and after drying just before melting."

Accordingly, the polyester described in Teijin Ltd. is crystallized to prevent water absorption.

The Applicant would like to bring to the Examiner's attention p. 5, lines 23-31 of Applicant's patent application that states as follows,

"As further described herein, one embodiment of the present invention may solve the problem of dimensional accuracy by applying a pre-treatment to a plastic film used to form the mold before it is supplied to the metal master mold. This pre-treatment may include applying a moisture absorption treatment to the plastic film before use. A suitable moisture absorption treatment is applied to the plastic film by spraying water or steam to the film, or by immersing the film into water or hot water, or by passing the film through a high-temperature high-humidity

atmosphere, so that the moisture content of the film substantially reaches saturation. When such a pre-treatment is applied, the plastic film is stabilized to such an extent that it can no longer absorb the moisture.”

Accordingly, the support of the mold claimed herein is subjected to a moisture absorption treatment in advance to maximize the absorption of water.

If one were to employ the polyester of Teijin Ltd. for use as the support, there would be no reason to subject the support to a moisture absorption treatment since the polyester of Teijin Ltd. is prevented from increasing in water content due to the crystallized surface layer.

Accordingly, the combination of Yokoyama et al. and Teijin Ltd. does not arrive at the claimed invention.

Elections/Restrictions

Applicant affirms the election to prosecute the invention of Group II, claims 9-12. Claims 1-8 having been withdrawn from further consideration.

The Examiner stated that, “The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept . . . “. The examiner further stated that, “Claim 1 is either obvious over or anticipated by US 2002/0007000. Accordingly, the special technical feature linking the two inventions, a flexible mold, does not provide a contribution over the prior art, and no single general inventive concept exists.”

Since Claim 1 is not obvious over or anticipated by US 2002/0007000 for the reasons discussed above, Group I and II both recite the same general inventive concept, i.e. the claimed mold. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the restriction requirement.

The Applicant has responded to all the rejections set forth by the Examiner. In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Office of Intellectual Property Counsel
3M Innovative Properties Company
Facsimile No.: 651-736-3833

By: /Carolyn A. Fischer/

Carolyn A. Fischer, Reg. No.: 39,091

Telephone No.: 651-575-3915